

**HONORED**

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**Lake commissioner gets NOACA award****Troy**

Lake County Commissioner Dan Troy is this year's winner of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency's Walter F. Ehrnfelt Award for his significant contributions to the betterment of Northeast Ohio. The award also recognizes outstanding leadership, dedication, cooperation and accomplishment, which were traits shown in the career of Ehrnfelt, the late mayor of Strongsville and former NOACA governing board member.

*To submit candidates for Honored, e-mail information to metrodesk@plaind.com, fax it to 216-999-6374, or mail it to Honored, c/o Plain Dealer Plaza, 1801 Superior Ave., Cleveland 44114. Please include the names and contact information of the honor's recipient, its source and yourself.*

# Matas moving to Auditor's Office

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Lake County Budget Director Michael T. Matas said Thursday that he will leave his position and take over as county Auditor Edward H. Zupancic's chief deputy.

"I am going to the Auditor's Office so I just want to thank all the commissioners for their efforts and so forth for the five years I was the budget director," Matas said during an interview after the commissioners' meeting Thursday morning. "I have got to know each of the commissioners individually and have a lot of respect for the job they do."

He has yet to officially resign from his post and commissioners will need to pass a resolution to release him from the position.

"It will be in the near future," Matas said. "I want to give (commissioners) a date before I tell you."

The position in the Auditor's Office became available after Joe Dowd, the current chief deputy auditor, told Zupancic he would retire effective at the end of June.

Zupancic confirmed Wednesday that Matas was offered that job in his office.

"It was a hard decision to have to do, but my favorite part of accounting is the financial reporting and it takes me back to my roots," Matas said.

The budget director said he did not seek out the new position.

"Mr. Dowd retired and Mr. Zupancic recently approached me and asked me to give it some thought and consideration," Matas said. "I asked for a good week to think about it."

He hopes to have an impact within the Auditor's Office.

"I have really big shoes to fill and Joe Dowd is very well respected in the county,"

Matas said. "I have the upmost respect for Joe and I'll try my (hardest) to do so. No one can replace Joe Dowd."

Prior to working for the commissioners, Matas worked for the state Auditor's Office as an audit manager and was actively involved in financial reporting aspects.

The budget director said he feels like he made a lot of strides to help make Lake County better during his tenure.

"Hopefully everybody could say I left Lake County in a better spot than when I started," Matas said. "I tried to come up with some creative ideas to bridge a gap in the downturn of the economy and see what we statutorily have to do instead of just what we've done in the past."

Commissioners Daniel P. Troy and Robert E. Aufuldish are concerned about the timing of Matas' departure, especially with the state budget poised to cut about \$2 million in funding.

Matas said the timing didn't play a role in his decision to leave the commissioners' office.

"I'll be honest with you, I knew the state budget was coming up, but really I didn't think about that before, but like I said I'm willing to work with (commissioners) on that," he said. "Hopefully we can bridge a gap. I don't plan to say, 'That's it.'"

Commissioner Raymond E. Sines said commissioners would check to see if there is a possibility for Matas to oversee the budgeting of the Commissioners' Office, but also hire someone to do the day-to-day activities. Matas would at the same time oversee the Auditor's Office as chief deputy.

Matas said that concept is something he is open to, but it is a matter for the elected officials to discuss.